

ICS Registry

Director  
Intelligence Community Staff  
Washington, D C 20505

DCI/ICS 82-3887  
9 December 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Honorable Robert C. McFarlane  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Fifth Orbiter Issue ☐

21 DEC 1982  
CMTE 24  
LOGGED

25X1

In response to your request at the 3 December 1982 SIG (Space)  
Meeting, the attached DCI position on the fifth orbiter is provided. ☐

25X1

25X1

Attachment

UPON REMOVAL OF ATTACHMENT,  
RECLASSIFY THIS MEMORANDUM  
TO UNCLASSIFIED

25X1

SECRET

SECRET

9 December 1982

DCI Position on Fifth Orbiter Issue

The DCI position is that our programs alone do not require a fifth orbiter. From a national perspective, however, we are concerned about our current lack of understanding of the long-term operability of the STS and the potential impact of attrition. Because of this, the need exists to ensure that the U.S. can adequately maintain an operational four orbiter fleet. This requires some reserve capacity to cope with unforeseen contingencies and a capability to repair an orbiter after a major incident. Given these needs, we do not believe it is wise to allow the STS orbiter production base to be shut down completely. Alternative II, by maintaining limited orbiter production capability, will preserve the nation's flexibility to respond to future needs at a modest additional cost compared to Alternative I. Alternative II is our recommended choice.

The DCI also notes that CIA has recently estimated that the Soviets are undertaking a variety of new space programs that will result in a period of rapid expansion.\* Soviet space hardware costs are expected to reach the equivalent of \$12 Billion a year by 1986--double the current outlays. The increased costs reflect

- Achievement of a permanent Soviet presence in space
- Advances in the technology available for intelligence collection, photoreconnaissance, and military support satellites
- Expansion of navigation, data relay, communications, and weather satellite networks
- Development of a reusable spacecraft, a reusable space transportation system similar to the U.S. shuttle, two new space launch vehicles, and increasing production of the largerst of the current Soviet space launchers

25X1

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

SUBJECT: Fifth Orbiter Issue

Distribution: DCI/ICS 82-3887

Copy 1 - Addressee

2 thru 12 - see attached list

13 - Under Secretary of Air Force/SAF/US

14 - [REDACTED]

25X1

15 - [REDACTED]

16 - Executive Registry

17 - D/ICS

18 - DD/ICS

19 - [REDACTED]

25X1

20 - [REDACTED]

21 - OA&E/Subj.

22 - OA&E/Chrono.

23 - OA&E/EO [REDACTED]

25X1

✓ 24 - ICS Registry

DCI/ICS/OA&E [REDACTED]

25X1

(9 December 1982)

SECRET

SUBJECT: Fifth Orbiter Issue (DCI/ICS 82-3887)

DISTRIBUTION

Copy 2 - WILLIAM SCHNEIDER  
UNDER SECRETARY FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE,  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Copy 3 - FRANK C. CARLUCCI  
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Copy 4- GUY W. FISKE  
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF COMMERCE  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Copy 5 - JOSEPH R. WRIGHT  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Copy 6 - JOHN N. McMAHON  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Copy 7 - LT GENERAL PAUL GORMAN  
ASSISTANT TO THE CHAIRMAN  
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Copy 8 - NORMAN TERRELL  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR NUCLEAR AND WEAPONS CONTROL  
ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

Copy 9 - RONALD B. FRANKUM  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Copy 10 - JAMES M. BEGGS  
ADMINISTRATOR  
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

Copy 11 - G. PHILIP HUGHES  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Copy 12 - CRAIG FULLER  
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR CABINET AFFAIRS